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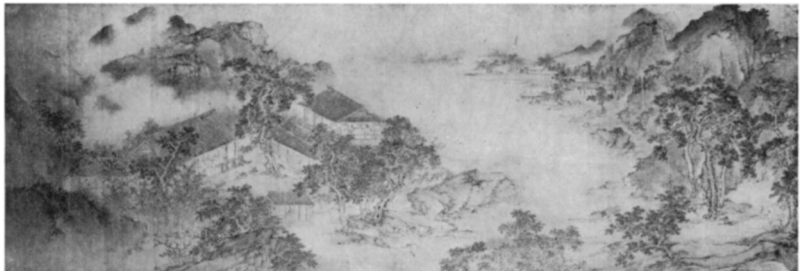
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A Chinese Landscape Scroll Painting
(The top section is the beginning of the scroll at the right, and the bottom the end at the left)
The Worcester R. Warner Collection

THE BULLETIN OF THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

A LANDSCAPE SCROLL PAINTING

Among the more important purchases made last year in China from a small part of the Worcester R. Warner fund is a landscape scroll of the Ming dynasty (A. D. 1368-1644). While the manner of painting is that of the Southern Sung school, modern criticism both in the West and in the East would unhesitatingly assign the picture to the early years of Ming—perhaps A. D. 1400, or perhaps to the short period of Yuan (A. D. 1333-1368) which preceded it. The soft yet sufficiently vivid blues and greens which predominate, the tight square web of silk on which it is painted, and the treatment of the leaves of the trees are unmistakable evidences of an artistic period later than the thirteenth century. And yet the technique of certain rocks and distances and of some of the rugged tree trunks, if seen an inch at a time, would be indistinguishable from Sung work.

It is an unfortunate though not a particularly disturbing fact that some dealer or owner—not a true amateur—has sought to gild the lily by placing at the end of the scroll the name Ch'au Ling Hsiang, a Sung figure and landscape painter. The forgery is unsuccessful partly because the characters are not those in use during the Sung dynasty, and partly because no existing work attributed to Ch'au Ling Hsiang resembles in any degree the Cleveland scroll. Small harm has been done by the forger as the letters are beyond the scope of the picture itself and do not disturb the original composition.

Even in so short a notice as this, one can not refrain from pointing out the contribution which museums can make to the critical standards of the West if they will collect such examples of the great Ming artists for exhibition. American sales of Eastern art during the past two years have been shocking to collectors because of the shamelessly wrong attributions which have been foisted on the public. The result has been a debasing of our conception of Ming art by attributing to that period a quantity of rather decorative modern trash, while excellent Ming work is labelled "Sung." Even "T'ang" pictures are to be had at every auction, and dealers' catalogues are rich in Sung and T'ang names. The truth is that there are probably not in this

country a dozen pictures of the Sung period, outside Mr. Freer's Smithsonian collection and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. As for the T'ang period, it is extremely doubtful if it is represented in America at all outside those two collections.

From the fourteenth century on, we have a fair number of examples, but the dealers dare not label them correctly, since collectors demand Sung or T'ang attributions. Let us then acknowledge that the great painters of Ming produced pictures more beautiful and to be desired than did many mediocre artists of an earlier date. That will not be inconsistent with the fact that the consummate masters were among the Sung or possibly earlier. Such an understanding on the part of the public and the dealers will not tend to lower the value of truly great examples, and at the same time will give Ming art due credit for soundness and for that quality of elegance combined with a mastery of technique which characterizes the period.

Such a landscape as the one under consideration combines every charm that is demanded by the canons of the Orient and the Occident. Here, among water-washed rocks, reeds are drawn so graceful and true that they rustle with the unfolding silk. Beyond are empty spaces where sky and water meet without horizon. Then distant mountains rise, bristling with stunted growth, and at their feet a farmstead is placed with its homely barnyard. A woman with a bucket in one hand leads a little child down to the rickety landing where the ducks begin to sail in toward her. From a gateway a spaniel charges out in fury. A boy has let his fishing line down from an overhanging willow. Two men stand by a purse-net dropped from an upright stake. Another net is being pulled aboard a boat in mid-stream. None of these figures is more than three-quarters of an inch high, and yet each has its poise, its sex, and its individuality as clear as if it were colossal bronze. If one fords the river there are cliffs and sloping flat rocks, and then, perhaps best of all, waterfalls spurting down clefts in the mountain wall to join and flow in a turbulent brook below the bridge where the farmer boys are crossing.

More trees and then an inlet, perhaps an arm of some great lake, along whose shore the farms dwindle till a point of land becomes a cloud.

But in all the charm of landscape, in all the easy mastery of distance and of foreground, of the immobility of rocks and the

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hurrying of water, this unknown painter knew best and loved best his trees. Their tops make no flat pattern of colored strokes as inevitably happens in the work of lesser men, but from each gnarled trunk shoot out the branches to form a crown. This man did not desire merely verdure for his mountains or accents along his river margins, he drew pines and larches and nut trees and elms so truly that the most distant silhouette of a tree on yonder peak has form and growth according to its kind.

Fenollosa's rendering of the famous essay by Kuo Hsi on landscape painting contains the following passage:

The critics of landscape usually give to the scene represented such qualities as are suitable to walk in, suitable or pleasant to look at, suitable to ramble in and suitable to live in. The sansui (landscape) that is supreme combines the four qualities. However, if it should be that only two can be given, then that which is suitable to live in and to ramble in are preferable.

Surely this scroll contains the four requisites to a high degree, and it will be found that they are the better tested by frequent visits, for new excursions can constantly be made among those rocky paths or by boat along the winding river. L. W.

NEW MEMBERS

The following, with twenty-six annual members, have been added to the membership list since the last *Bulletin* was issued:

FELLOW FOR LIFE	
Bourne, B. F.	Norton, Mrs. D. Z.
FELLOW	
Bole, Mrs. B. P.	Oglebay, E. W.
LIFE	
Janes, Julius F.	Murfey, L. A.
Lowman, Dr. John H.	Weil, Samuel D.

One hundred and forty-seven annual members have been transferred or have been lost by resignation or by cancellation for non-payment, the membership on July 1 standing as follows:

Benefactors	6
Honorary Fellows	19
Fellows in Perpetuity	4
Fellows for Life	13
Fellows	102
Life Members	413
Sustaining Members	20
Annual Members	2,074
	Total, 2,651